

Article

Evaluating the Serial Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction and Self-Efficacy in the Relationship Between Work–Family Conflict and Turnover Intention of Portuguese Employees

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Abstract: Previous studies conducted in Portugal on work–family conflict and turnover intention have focused on analyzing how difficulties in balancing employees’ work and personal lives affect individual commitment and performance, and little attention has been paid to analyzing factors that may reduce turnover intentions. Therefore, the present study fills a relevant gap in the literature by analyzing other factors that influence turnover intention. This study aimed to analyze the direct and indirect relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention, with job satisfaction and self-efficacy mediating this relationship. The sample included 277 employees from different sectors in Portugal. The results confirmed that work–family conflict is positively related to turnover intention and that job satisfaction and self-efficacy serially mediate the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention. These results suggest that managers should consider analyzing workloads while improving well-being at work so that employees can pay attention to some aspects of their personal lives to reduce work–family conflict and turnover intentions. In addition, the results emphasize the importance of promoting self-efficacy through the continuous design of training plans for better guidance and coordination in the execution of tasks.



Keywords: work–family conflict; job satisfaction; self-efficacy; turnover intention

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1. Introduction

Over time, employee turnover intention has been identified as a significant challenge for organizations, with high costs and a negative impact on obtaining and maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage (Yücel, 2021). According to Awan et al. (2021), organizations pursue favorable outcomes and are generally aware that their employees play a pivotal role in their success. Consequently, organizations are inclined to prioritize the analysis of employee turnover intention while concurrently striving to enhance productivity and profitability (Lazzari et al., 2022; Stamolampros et al., 2019). Therefore, developing strategies to minimize employee turnover intention in small and medium-sized companies has been integrated into organizational policies to increase performance and sustainable profits (Qureshi et al., 2024; Degbey et al., 2020).

A review of empirical studies reveals that certain internal factors, including task performance, organizational commitment, organizational support, and the work environment, can reduce employee turnover intention (Callado et al., 2023; Ramalho Luz et al., 2018). Conversely, problems related to workplace external factors, such as the employee’s personal and social circumstances, have been found to correlate with an elevated turnover intention

(Yildiz et al., 2021). For Li et al. (2022), the work–family conflict has been identified as a factor that increases employee turnover intention. Work–family conflict is a significant predictor of turnover intention, especially when employees cannot balance their personal lives and their careers (Medina-Garrido et al., 2021; Sirgy & Lee, 2018).

The workplace operational processes are influenced by pressures arising from the dual role between work and family, as employees should comprehend the need to find strategies to achieve balance (Duarte et al., 2023). The studies performed in Portugal on work–family conflict and turnover intention focused on analyzing the difficulties in articulating employees' work and personal lives and evaluating other factors such as engagement and individual performance (e.g., Ribeiro et al., 2023). Although these approaches allow the integration of different concepts that influence turnover intention into the same model, there is still a need to include other constructs that allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the factors that influence turnover intention (Oh & Chhinzer, 2021).

Job satisfaction has become one of the most studied topics in organizational behavior because it is critical for employees, managers, and other stakeholders (Sommer et al., 2024). The concept of job satisfaction is defined as an individual's affective response to a work situation, so it encompasses the feelings an individual develops about work (Chen et al., 2019). In this study, we intend to strengthen previous evidence that job satisfaction allows employees to reduce turnover intention, regardless of the industry (Li et al., 2022). On the other hand, we point out that although self-efficacy has been considered a little-studied construct in the literature on turnover intention (e.g., Mondo et al., 2022), it may be interesting to understand the dynamics of the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention.

Previous studies that focused on analyzing the relationship between work–family conflict, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy were concerned with the differences observed in the workplace between men and women (e.g., P. Wang et al., 2010) and, therefore, did not explore the possible role of job satisfaction and self-efficacy in the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention. The present study fills this relevant gap in the literature on turnover intention by presenting an approach that includes job satisfaction and self-efficacy. This study builds on the findings of previous research that identified a positive correlation between work–family conflict and turnover intentions (e.g., Li et al., 2022) and studies that demonstrated that job satisfaction and self-efficacy can reduce turnover intention (e.g., Lai & Chen, 2012).

The present study aimed to analyze the direct and indirect relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention, with job satisfaction and self-efficacy mediating this relationship. This study contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention. First, the present study strengthens the evidence that work–family conflict and turnover intention are positively correlated. Second, by analyzing the role of job satisfaction and self-efficacy as mechanisms through which work–family conflict is related to turnover intention, policies can be designed to improve the organizational environment and promote technical training to achieve desirable job performance. Finally, this study presents unique evidence integrating work–family conflict, job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and turnover intention in the Portuguese context.

The remaining part of this article is organized as follows. First, the definitions and theoretical foundations of the constructs under study, namely work–family conflict, job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and turnover intentions, are presented. Second, we present the methodology, which includes a description of the methodological options, participants, measures, and data analysis strategies. Third, we analyze the main findings of the study, followed by a description of the study's implications. Finally, the conclusion of the study is presented.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Work–Family Conflict and Turnover Intention

The reconciliation of familial and professional responsibilities has become increasingly challenging, with work-related issues frequently impinging upon the individual's personal life, creating a conflict between work demands and the family's needs (Andrade & Petiz Lousã, 2021). Work–family conflict has been conceptualized as a set of mutually incompatible role pressures in work and family domains (P. Wang et al., 2010). For Duarte et al. (2023), work–family conflict occurs when work pressures interfere with family well-being. Previous research has presented the work–family conflict as a term used to illustrate the competition between the professional role demanded by the work environment and the employee's family life (Haar et al., 2012; P. Wang et al., 2010).

Turnover intention has been identified as the variable that reflects the employee's desire to end the employment relationship (Yücel, 2021). For Lazzari et al. (2022), turnover intention considers the employee's expressed desire to terminate their employment contract unilaterally or corresponds to the process that involves a series of attempts to leave the current job. Previous studies have highlighted that turnover intention consists of an employee's decision-making process that may jeopardize the materialization of their departure from their current job or profession (Awan et al., 2021). According to Oh and Chhinzer (2021), organizations should analyze mechanisms to reduce turnover intention, as it has been considered a relevant predictor of the employee's final decision to leave their current organization or profession.

In recent years, the problems of reconciling work and family life have increased (Andrade & Petiz Lousã, 2021). Previous studies identified work–family as a predictor of turnover intention (Li et al., 2022; Y. Wang et al., 2024). According to Nohe and Sonntag (2014), thoughts of leaving a job arise when work–family conflict reaches a level that exceeds an employee's ability to cope or overcome it. A study conducted in the Portuguese context with 167 employees from different organizations concluded that employees who perceived a high level of work–family conflict had a greater intention to leave their jobs (Ribeiro et al., 2023). Therefore, the conflict between work and family leads to constant thoughts of turnover intention (Blomme et al., 2010). In light of the evidence presented, we hypothesize the following:

H1: *Work–family conflict is positively related to turnover intention.*

2.2. Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has become one of the most studied topics in organizational behavior because it is a critical issue for employees, managers, and other stakeholders (Garmendia et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2005). The concept of job satisfaction is defined as an individual's affective response to a work situation, so it encompasses the feelings an individual develops about work (Sommer et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2021). Although Maslow's seminal study on job satisfaction refers to the traditional models of job satisfaction, it is important to note that job satisfaction is not solely based on an individual's feelings about their work; it is also somewhat influenced by the nature of the work and the expectations that individuals develop about the results of the work (Ramalho Luz et al., 2018). Therefore, job satisfaction reflects the worker's feelings towards the organization (Chen et al., 2019).

When work negatively affects an employee's personal life, it creates the perception that work is the source of problems, leading to a negative attitude toward work and decreasing job satisfaction (Y. Wang et al., 2023). An empirical study of 505 employees in three provinces in China found that work–family conflict was negatively related to job satisfaction (Li et al., 2022). For Chen et al. (2023), one of the leading turnover intention

factors is the feeling of job dissatisfaction. Therefore, turnover intention decreases as the employee gradually expresses job satisfaction. A quantitative study performed in Huangpi District, Wuhan, China, on 1370 employees with more than six months of work experience showed that job satisfaction was negatively related to turnover intention. The present study suggests that work–family conflict is negatively related to job satisfaction and that job satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intention (Chen et al., 2019). Based on the evidence presented, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: *Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention.*

2.3. The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy

The theory of self-efficacy is based on the work of Bandura (1977) to analyze the actual expectations of employees when performing specific tasks. Self-efficacy is a positive belief that motivates human action to perform tasks essential to organizational success (R. Geremias et al., 2022; Erum et al., 2020). For Barni et al. (2019), self-efficacy is associated with the capability to perform tasks with a high level of performance. Self-efficacy requires the development of action plans to perform tasks with a high level of performance (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, self-efficacy allows the implementation of concrete actions regarding a decision-making process aligned with the defined objectives, even under adverse circumstances (Pignault et al., 2023; Honicke & Broadbent, 2016).

The link between work–family conflict and self-efficacy was highlighted as a relevant approach that can provide a more comprehensive understanding of its impact on workplace outcomes (Baghban et al., 2010). A longitudinal study with two data collection points and a one-year interval between each collection, involving 242 employees in Spain, found a negative relationship between work–family conflict and self-efficacy (Rubio et al., 2015). The negative relationship between work–family conflict and self-efficacy occurs when employees allocate more time and energy to family tasks, thus leaving less time to attend to job demands (P. Wang et al., 2010). Therefore, the negative effect of work–family conflict on self-efficacy tends to be exacerbated when organizations do not provide adequate resources for employees to fulfill their job responsibilities (Kim & Jung, 2022; Cohen & Kirchmeyer, 1995).

For Shao et al. (2022), employees with high self-efficacy set high goals because they are not afraid of failure, and, therefore, they are determined to achieve the set goals and are less likely to give up. Previous studies showed that employee self-efficacy gives new motivation to adjust goals depending on obstacles, reducing turnover intention (Albrecht & Marty, 2020). According to Afzal et al. (2019), employees who present higher levels of self-efficacy tend to be more responsible and seek strategies to deal with job challenges, thus decreasing their turnover intention. The study performed with 226 employees in Turkey showed that self-efficacy contributed to employees responding positively even to various disappointments at work, such as an organization that does not guarantee job security (Etehadhi & Karatepe, 2018). Therefore, we argue that self-efficacy can be used as a mechanism that allows us to minimize turnover intention despite the existence of work–family conflict. The evidence presented leads us to formulate the following hypothesis:

H3: *Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention.*

2.4. Serial Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction and Self-Efficacy

Previous studies showed that self-efficacy positively relates to job satisfaction (Katsantonis, 2020; Lai & Chen, 2012). Bandura (1997) pointed out significant differences between individuals with different levels of self-efficacy. Specifically, individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to perform challenging tasks, to the detriment of those with low self-efficacy. According to Cayupe et al. (2023), employees with high levels of intrinsic satisfaction are more

likely to cope effectively with daily workplace difficulties. In addition, a study by [Kondratowicz and Godlewska \(2022\)](#) with 283 employees in Poland showed a positive relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Therefore, based on the evidence presented, it can be inferred that if employees realize that they can cope with work challenges, even if they perceive work–family conflict, they will have lower turnover intention because they will be satisfied to perform a series of challenging tasks effectively. Figure 1 presents the hypothetical model of the study. Given these arguments, we suggest the following:

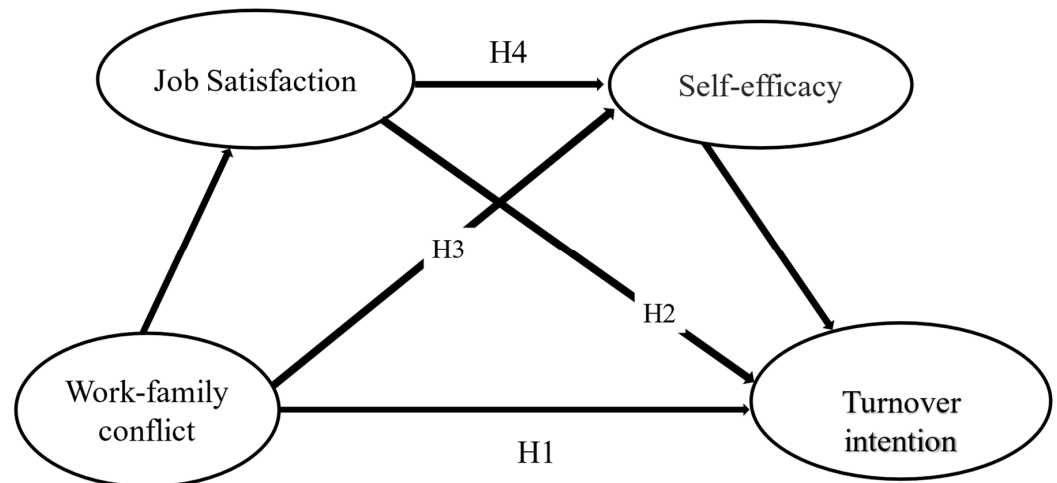


Figure 1. The hypothetical model.

H4: *Job satisfaction and self-efficacy are sequential mediators in the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention.*

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Procedure and Sample

To test the defined hypotheses, this study employed a quantitative methodology with a correlational and descriptive design. An online questionnaire on Google Forms was performed to conduct a self-report survey among Portuguese employees from different sectors. The questionnaire was disseminated through social networks, personal contacts, and contacts with various organizations in Portugal, which served as a distribution and dissemination channel. Participants were informed that the researchers involved in this study would use the data confidentially. Furthermore, participants were informed that there were no correct or incorrect responses to the questions and that they should provide their answers honestly. Finally, participants were told that the questionnaire was anonymous, thus preventing the identification of any individual participant.

The questionnaire was initially available from 23 March 2023 until 14 April 2023. Given the low number of responses obtained at this stage (166), the data collection process was extended until April 2024. This option was selected to ensure the minimum number of 200 participants indicated by [Hair et al. \(2019\)](#) was achieved for the structural equation modeling application considering maximum likelihood estimation. After the data collection period was completed, 277 questionnaires were deemed valid for analysis.

The sample consisted of 68% males, and the mean age was 34 years (SD = 12.96). Concerning the most significant educational qualifications, 49% of respondents had obtained a university degree, while 23% had completed a master's degree. Considering the number of children, most respondents (37%) had one child, 23% had two children, and 20% had three children. Regarding the employment contract, 48% had an employment contract for

an indefinite period. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that 48% of employees have been with the company for more than one year.

3.2. Measures

Work–family conflict: We used the 10-item scale developed by [Carlson et al. \(2000\)](#). Examples of items include the following: “The tension and anxiety caused by my work interfere with my family life” and “My work takes away time that I would like to spend with my family/friends”. The response scale used was a five-point Likert scale, from (1) “Totally Disagree” to (5) “Totally Agree”, with Cronbach’s alpha of 0.90.

Job satisfaction: We performed the questionnaire with five items presented by [Judge et al. \(2000\)](#). It is a five-point Likert scale, from (1) “very dissatisfied” to (5) “very satisfied”. The sample items include “I find real pleasure in my job” and “I feel very satisfied with my current job”. The Cronbach’s alpha value reported by the authors was 0.92.

Self-efficacy: The employee self-efficacy scale was measured with seven items based on the General Self-Efficacy Scale by [Schwarzer and Jerusalem \(1995\)](#). The response scale used is a five-point Likert type, from (1) “Strongly Disagree” to (5) “Strongly Agree”. An example item was “I always solve difficult problems with persistence”. The value of the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient reported by the authors was 0.80.

Turnover intention: The turnover intention was measured by a widely used three-item scale by [Mobley et al. \(1979\)](#), which was subsequently applied to Portuguese employees by [Esteves and Lopes \(2016\)](#). The response scale used a five-point Likert type, from (1) “Strongly Disagree” to (5) “Strongly Agree”. An example item was “I will probably look for a new job next year”. The Cronbach’s alpha value reported by the authors was 0.80.

The scales were translated from English into Portuguese using the translation/retroversion method. This method was validated and widely used in previous empirical studies in the Portuguese context (e.g., [Esteves et al., 2018](#)), and, therefore, it can be assumed to be a reliable approach.

3.3. Data Analysis

We performed the data analysis in distinct phases. Firstly, we used the SPSS software (v.29) to perform the descriptive statistics and to analyze the scales’ internal consistency. Secondly, to examine the factor structure of the scales, we ran the confirmatory factor analysis using Amos (v.29). Therefore, the model fit was analyzed based on acceptability parameters validated by [Hair et al. \(2019\)](#): Chi-Square (χ^2): p -value ≤ 0.05 ; Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI): ≥ 0.90 ; Comparative Fit Index (CFI): ≥ 0.90 ; Goodness of Fit Index (GFI): ≥ 0.90 ; Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR): ≤ 0.08 ; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA): ≤ 0.08 . Finally, to test the hypotheses, we also used the Amos software.

4. Results

4.1. Measures Validity

To address the instrument measurement, the answer engagement was evaluated by calculating the standard deviation of the answers and the number of items with missing data responses, as recommended by [Flake and Fried \(2020\)](#). In this process, 10 surveys were excluded due to them having more than four missing values and a standard deviation less than 0.5, as suggested in previous studies (e.g., [Esteves & Lopes, 2016](#)). Following this screening process, 267 questionnaires were validated.

We also analyze the data normality by calculating skewness and kurtosis. The skewness and kurtosis values were within the range of ± 2 , indicating that all constructs met the requirement of normal distribution, as previously noted by [Tabachnick and Fidell](#)

(2021). Furthermore, we evaluated the multicollinearity test by analyzing the variance inflation factor (VIF). The results demonstrated that the VIF values were below the cut-off value of 3.3, ranging from 1.064 to 1.181, revealing the absence of multicollinearity in the data, as suggested by Hair et al. (2019). Furthermore, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis of all study constructs. Table 1 presents an overview of the results derived from the confirmatory factor analysis.

Table 1. Results of confirmatory factor analysis.

Study Variables	χ^2	Df	<i>p</i>	TLI	CFI	GFI	SRMR	RMSEA
1. Work–family conflict	66.768	32	<0.001	0.963	0.974	0.950	0.040	0.064
2. Job satisfaction	9.517	4	<0.001	0.980	0.992	0.986	0.078	0.072
3. Self-efficacy	89.789	14	<0.001	0.886	0.911	0.911	0.071	0.043
4. Turnover intention	64.973	11	0.079	0.808	0.900	0.919	0.079	0.016

4.2. Descriptive Statistics and Construct Validity

Table 2 presents the results of the mean, standard deviation, correlation between the variables under study, and Cronbach’s alpha values. The mean values ranged from 2.45 to 3.90, while the standard deviation ranged from 0.68 to 1.06. On the other hand, the results showed that work–family conflict is positively correlated with turnover intention ($r = 0.46, p < 0.01$) and negatively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = -0.36, p < 0.01$) and self-efficacy ($r = -0.19, p < 0.01$). Job satisfaction is positively correlated with self-efficacy ($r = 0.22, p < 0.01$) and negatively correlated with turnover intention ($r = -0.77, p < 0.01$). Lastly, self-efficacy is correlated negatively with turnover intention ($r = -0.23, p < 0.01$). It is important to highlight that all variables presented Cronbach’s alpha values above 0.70.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, AVE, and correlations between study variables.

Study Variables	M	SD	AVE	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	1	2	3	4
1. Work–family Conflict	2.81	0.93	0.623	0.789	(0.90)			
2. Job satisfaction	3.51	0.92	0.595	0.771	−0.36 **	(0.81)		
3. Self-efficacy	3.90	0.68	0.600	0.774	−0.19 **	0.22 **	(0.86)	
4. Turnover intention	2.45	1.06	0.621	0.788	0.46 **	−0.77 **	−0.23 **	(0.85)

N = 267. Cronbach’s α s (in parentheses). ** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). AVE (Average Variance Extracted).

Additionally, we calculated the average variance extracted (AVE) to assess the convergent validity of the constructs under study. The AVE results are above 0.50, thus respecting the cut-off value of 0.50 recommended by Hair et al. (2019). On the other hand, the discriminant validity of the constructs was assessed according to the criterion of Fornell and Larcker (1981), which consists of comparing the square root of the AVE of each construct with its correlation coefficients. The results showed that the square root values of the AVE are higher than the correlation values between the variables, thus confirming the discriminant validity between the constructs.

4.3. Assessing Common Method Bias

As previously noted by X. Wang and Cheng (2020), a cross-sectional study is a study in which data are collected at a specific time using the same source. This approach has been found to exacerbate the problem of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; R. L. Geremias et al., 2024). Consequently, statistical “remedies” have been widely recommended in the literature to mitigate this issue (R. L. Geremias et al., 2021; Podsakoff et al., 2012).

Therefore, the common method factor was employed to investigate the adverse effects of common method bias. The results indicated that the value of the common method factor was 17%. According to Williams and McGonagle (2015), this value was below the 25% threshold required to ensure the reliability of the results. This finding suggests that the reliability of the results should not be affected by common method bias.

4.4. Hypothesis Tests

According to Hu and Bentler (1999), the hypothesized structural model must have acceptable fit indices. The results show that our structural model met the recommended acceptability requirements (χ^2 (113) = 218.200, $p < 0.001$; TLI = 0.953; CFI = 0.961; GFI = 0.913; SRMR = 0.080; RMSEA = 0.059). To test the hypotheses, we used the bootstrap approach with a 90% confidence interval over the standardized indirect effects, which was widely used in previous studies (e.g., R. Geremias et al., 2020).

The results showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention ($\beta = 0.415$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. The second hypothesis is related to the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention. The results indicated that work–family conflict is negatively related to job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.254$; $p < 0.001$) and that job satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intention ($\beta = -0.494$; $p < 0.001$). Additionally, the results showed that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention (indirect effect = 0.128; 90% CI; LLCI = 0.073; ULCI = 0.201), supporting hypothesis H2.

The third hypothesis suggested that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention. The results showed that work–family conflict is negatively related to self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.020$; $p < 0.01$) and that self-efficacy is negatively related to turnover intention ($\beta = -0.035$; $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the results confirmed that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention (indirect effect = 0.026; 90% CI; LLCI = 0.002; ULCI = 0.073), thus confirming hypothesis H3.

Finally, hypothesis H4 suggests that job satisfaction and self-efficacy serially mediate the relationship between work–life conflict and turnover intention. The indirect effect of work–family conflict on turnover intention through the mediation of job satisfaction and self-efficacy is statistically significant ($\beta = 0.020$; LLCI = 0.004; ULCI = 0.039). Therefore, the results showed that there is a negative relationship between work–family conflict and job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.254$; $p < 0.001$), job satisfaction is positively related to self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.248$; $p < 0.001$), and self-efficacy is negatively related to turnover intention ($\beta = -0.035$; $p < 0.01$). These findings support hypothesis H4. The results presented allowed us to validate all the hypotheses defined. Figure 2 shows the results of the hypothesis test.

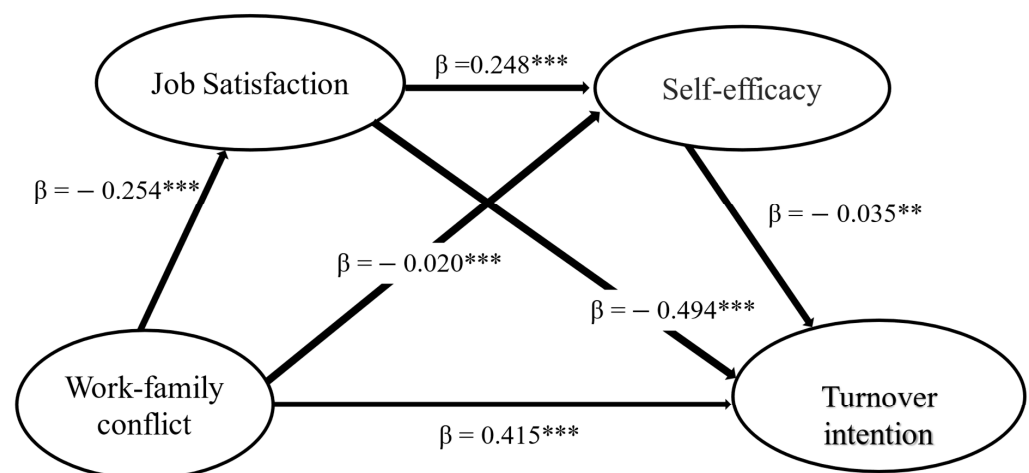


Figure 2. Final model. ** $p < 0.01$ and *** $p < 0.001$.

5. Discussion

The present study aimed to analyze the direct and indirect relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention, with job satisfaction and self-efficacy mediating this relationship. The study supported the positive relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention (H1). This result is consistent with previous studies that indicate that employees who experience the feeling of work–family conflict become emotionally exhausted with all aspects related to their work, thus contributing to an increase in turnover intention (Blomme et al., 2010). For Li et al. (2022), the increase in working hours leads to an imbalance of roles between work and family, consuming time usually spent with the family and constituting a source of stress that raises turnover intention. In a longitudinal study with 665 employees in Germany, the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention was examined with two moments of data collection, and the results showed that work–family conflict increased turnover intention 5 months after the first process of data collection (Nohe & Sonntag, 2014).

The mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention was confirmed (H2). According to Chen et al. (2019), there is a lack of studies considering job satisfaction as a mediating variable that allows an understanding of different outcomes in the workplace. Based on these arguments, we analyzed the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention. The results of this study indicate that this relationship seems to occur, because, even if employees are satisfied with work-related issues such as work environment, compensation, facilities, and defined policies, the burden caused by work–family conflict will be greater, resulting in a decrease in job satisfaction. For Ramalho Luz et al. (2018), job satisfaction occurs when employees experience pleasure in the work environment due to the convergence of personal and organizational interests, which decreases the turnover intention.

The results supported the third hypothesis (H3), which demonstrated the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention. In the study, conducted by Albrecht and Marty (2020), self-efficacy is identified as a significant construct that shapes the relationship between the employee and the organization, whether directly or indirectly. In their study, Blomme and colleagues (2010) integrate a sample of 578 employees in the Netherlands. Their findings indicate that work–family conflict is associated with feelings of exhaustion, which in turn impairs an individual's capability to perform tasks effectively. According to Mondo et al. (2022), individuals with high self-efficacy develop confidence at a high level, allowing them to set challenging goals and complete tasks successfully because they can more easily overcome obstacles, which reduces the turnover intention.

The serial mediating role of job satisfaction and self-efficacy in the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention was supported (H4). This result seems to occur because, as the conflict between work and family increases, employees begin to perceive that relevant aspects of their personal lives are being ignored, which affects their job satisfaction (Li et al., 2022). For P. Wang et al. (2010), work–family conflict tends to negatively affect job satisfaction and self-efficacy when employees are encouraged to work more hours without this process being accompanied by improved working conditions and explicit recognition for the work performed. The positive relationship between job satisfaction and self-efficacy seems to confirm what was pointed out by Luthans et al. (2006), where the authors argued that intrinsic satisfaction leads to the performance of challenging tasks and the achievement of better results, which tend to gradually contribute to the reduction in turnover intention.

5.1. Limitations and Future Directions

This study has some limitations. First, it should be noted that cross-sectional studies do not allow for the determination of causality between variables (Bollen & Pearl, 2013). Previous studies have provided evidence that self-efficacy is the antecedent of job satisfaction, which is the opposite of the relationship supported by this study. Consequently, future studies may employ a longitudinal design, thereby facilitating an investigation into the directionality of the relationship between these two variables. Second, cross-sectional studies exacerbate the issue of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012), which persists despite the implementation of statistical “remedies”. It would be beneficial for future studies to consider collecting data from multiple sources, such as managers, family members, and friends. Third, the present study used a more comprehensive approach for Portuguese employees and did not consider the sector of activity in which the participants work. This fact can be considered a limitation for the generalization of the results of this study. Future studies are encouraged to address this issue. Fourth, as in the present study, we adopted previously validated scales for the Portuguese context, and we only used confirmatory factor analysis, considering the fact that exploratory factor analysis is recommended in the initial stages of scale development (Knekta et al., 2019). Nevertheless, we acknowledge that exploratory factor analysis can be interesting in identifying unexpected factors and assessing the instrument’s dimensionality. Future studies are encouraged to perform additional analyses. Finally, it is also important to note that this study only considered employees with children (at least one), which may limit the generalizability of the results presented. Future studies should consider collecting data from employees without children to facilitate comparison with the presented results.

5.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications

The present study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, this study complements the results presented on the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention (e.g., Li et al., 2022). Although this relationship has already been analyzed in Portugal (Ribeiro et al., 2023), we found no evidence of studies that have included job satisfaction in the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention in different sectors of activity. Since the evidence presented in this study suggests that job satisfaction allows for the minimizing of employees’ turnover intentions, managers should consider analyzing workloads while improving well-being at work so that employees can pay attention to some aspects of their personal lives to reduce work–family conflict and turnover intentions.

Second, we provide evidence that self-efficacy minimizes turnover intentions. Self-efficacy is widely considered to be a psychological capability similar to a state, and as such, it is malleable and can be developed through micro-interventions (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). The study by Russo and Stoykova (2015) included a pooled sample of 40 professionals and students with one-month follow-up, and statistical analyses revealed significant improvements in participants’ self-efficacy that remained stable throughout the month, confirming the durability of the training effects. This evidence may lead managers to commit to increasing their employees’ overall level of self-efficacy through the implementation of training in the selection process of new employees, as well as the continuous design of training plans for better guidance and coordination in the execution of tasks.

Third, another contribution of this study comes from the serial mediation between job satisfaction and self-efficacy to analyze the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention. This result fills an important gap in the turnover intention field, which led Albrecht and Marty (2020) to point out the importance of identifying mechanisms

that allow for reducing turnover intention. In practice, managers should be concerned with promoting policies prioritizing job satisfaction and the creation of working conditions that allow employees to constantly improve task performance and achieve individual and organizational goals so that the impact of work–family conflict on turnover intention can be gradually reduced.

Finally, the notion that work–family conflict contributes to the increased turnover intention of Portuguese employees in different sectors of activity may encourage organizational managers to implement concrete strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of work–family conflict. According to Kelly et al. (2011), managers should define various work schedule flexibility initiatives to fit the work schedule to the profile of employees, which can improve work quality and reduce turnover intention.

6. Conclusions

This study aimed to analyze the direct and indirect relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intention, with job satisfaction and self-efficacy mediating this relationship. The results showed that work–family conflict increases turnover intentions, which harms various outcomes in the organizational context. This finding is relevant because it reinforces previous findings on the importance of employees constantly seeking a balance between personal and professional life (e.g., Andrade & Petiz Lousã, 2021). Furthermore, the present study also found evidence of the mediating role of job satisfaction and self-efficacy in the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intentions. According to Awan et al. (2021), analyzing mechanisms that reduce turnover intention has a relevant impact on work coordination and task performance, thus contributing to improving organizational performance. Therefore, the present study suggests that managers and other leaders interested in reducing the costs of turnover intentions can make efforts to improve employees' job satisfaction and the development of self-efficacy.

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